returned north, to the country of the Ba-Loyi, led by their ancestor, Mashakatsi. This man, who was a great hunter, saw that he could easily defeat the Ba-Nyai who were settled in those parts, and brought back his followers with him. He became the founder of the dynasty of Maluleke. (For further details about these legends, see Addresses and Papers of the Joint Meeting of British and South African Associations for the Advancement of Science, Johannesburg 1905.)

As regards the Tembe clan, it is said to have come down as far as Delagoa Bay from the Kalanga country by the Nkomati river on a floating island of papyrus, and to have crossed the Tembe river and settled to the south of the Bay. An old saying alludes to this arrival and to the conquest of the country :

Phandje, phandje ra nala—Tembe kulu a wela.

As the palm leaf with its numerous feelers—so did the ancestor Tembe when he crossed.

He placed his sons in all the districts of the plain to govern in his name. The Tembe people, when they greet each other, sometimes use the salutation Nkalanga, i. e. man of the north or of the Kalanga country, and there is little doubt that, notwithstanding the legendary traits in this tradition, the fact itself of the northern origin of these clans is true. In the course of time the chiefs of Matutwen and Maputju, descendants of Tembe, became independent.

Most of the other clans point to Zululand or to Swaziland as having been their first abode, which they left to invade the low country of the coast. Mpfumu and Matjolo are both sons of Nhlaruti, who is said to have been the first invader ; from him sprang their two clans which have become independent of and even hostile to each other. The Nondwane families point to the neighbourhood of Komati Port as being the place from which they came. There were successive invasions of a peaceful character. These people still turn the face of their dead to the west, because the clan came from the Lebombo hills, and this rite proves that the tradition is well founded. The Nkuna, Khosa, and Hlabi clans also claim the same western or south-western origin. Amongst the Ba-Nkuna, some old men say they know

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763 Some ethnographers have adopted the "embryonic explanation" to account for this custom, which is found all through primitive humanity, from the Mousterian age down to the first inhabitants of Egypt, and amongst a great many uncivilised tribes all over the earth (1). They say: "Primitive man placed the corpse in the attitude of the child before birth because he believed that death is but a new birth, the beginning of a new life..." I asked Viguet if he thought this to be the true original [843] explanation. He told me he did not know ; he would not deny it. But there is one fact which prevents its acceptance ; the Thongas have never done any dissection, and are ignorant of the position of the foetus in the womb. So probably are all primitive peoples. This kind of knowledge came much later in the evolution of mankind. The intention of this rite is more probably to place a dying man in the sitting position which a Thonga generally adopts when in his hut, as the grave is *but a hut in the earth* and he is meant to continue his life in it exactly as before. All the other burial rites confirm this explanation, as we shall see.

Manyibane is dead... In some districts they see that he does not die with *closed hands*. It is taboo, because then the children of the dead will quarrel (Viguet). They close his eyes and take away all his clothes. In the Mpfumo clan, they *wash the body*. Afterwards they cover him with an old rug. No one cries. Lamentations are absolutely prohibited before the burial is over ; it is taboo. It would " break the back " of the men who have to perform the funeral rites.

764 Should there be *strangers* in the village when the death takes
761 place, they will run away quickly to avoid defilement ; otherwise
783 they would have to take part in all the purifying ceremonies of the
372 following days.

Without delay, the *fire* which was burning in the funeral hut is removed and carried out into the square. It must be carefully kept alight. This is a taboo. Should there be rain, it must be protected. All the inhabitants must use this fire during the next five days. It will be put out by the doctor, with sand or water, on the day of the dispersion of the mourners. He will then

(1) See my paper in *Anthropos* Sept. 1910 : " Two burials at twenty thousand years distance."

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764 761 783 262 light a new one, and everyone will take from it embers to kindle his own fire in the different huts. It is one of the conditions of the purification of the village.

The same day young people are sent to all the relatives in the neighbourhood to announce the death. Even the relations who are absent far away, in Johannesburg, must be informed; this is done in the following way. Someone takes a handful of grass, lights it and, when it is on fire, throws it in the direction of the absent one, saying: "Your brother, here, is dead. Do not fear. May your enemies (viz. your white employers) have consideration and love for you, that you may find sleep and health."

II. *The grave.*

764 The men of the village then go out to dig the grave. They choose a place behind the hut of the deceased or somewhere further off in the little forest which generally surrounds the village; or in the *ntimu*, the sacred wood, if he were one of the guardians of the forest (1), one belonging to the elder branch of the family.

First of all the diggers see that a tree is near the grave on which to hang some of the belongings of the deceased (those which will be kept but will have to be purified); they dig a hole of about six feet in length, four in width, and two and half or three deep. This first hole can be dug with ordinary hoes. Then, at the side of it, they excavate a second hole, more or less circular in form, using for this a light wooden board, generally the rim of an old basket. The sides of the hole are well smoothed by means of this instrument. In the Northern clans they sometimes smear it with mud taken from the river; they also put a reed beside the corpse, and grass, which grew in water, is spread at the bottom of the grave (2). So the grave, is in a way, double. It presents

(1) In the Southern clans the grave of the husband or the wife is dug in front of the hut in which they were living (as this hut is to be abandoned); in the case of a child, he will be buried at the side of the hut (as, in this case, the hut will not be destroyed.) The grave is surrounded by a fence made of sticks and plastered with clay. Thus people will remember where the corpse has been buried.

(2) Compare this custom with the rite of burying little children and twins in wet soil.

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764/775 two levels, the higher, the large hole, gives access to the smaller, the circular ovoid grave. The first is called *the square* (hubo) of the deceased, the second is *his hut* (yindlu or shinyatu). He will dwell in the hut, but come out from it and sit in his square underground, just as he did when living in his village (1). (Elias.)

764/787 When the grave has been duly dug, the diggers call the relatives to inspect their work, and show them that their deceased relation has been well cared for. The lower grave, being excavated in the wall of the higher, forms a kind of vault. It seems as if it were considered necessary that the earth which will protect the head should not be disturbed. When all the mourners have come at the call of the diggers, it sometimes happens that the vault of the grave falls in. This is a very bad sign. The cause of the accident is this ; either the person who has bewitched the deceased is present or, amongst the assistants, there is one who has been guilty of " matlulana " against him (2)! The grave is a *mondjo*, a magical means of divination.

III. *The burial.*

764/761 The diggers may be four in number, but they are generally only two ; the master of the mourning (nwinyi wa nkosi), who is the brother next to the deceased, and another younger near relative, for instance a son. Both must be married, because married people alone can get rid of the defilement of death by the " lahla khombo, " which we shall explain later. Should an unmarried son be asked to undertake the work of burial, he

(1) In some clans of the North there is only one hole and no excavation at the side. But what I have described here is the rule amongst the Ba-Ronga, except where civilisation has already modified the old custom.

(2) On this point Mboza and Elias did not agree. Mboza said that the falling in of the grave can only be caused by the presence of the wizard who killed the deceased. Elias asserts that the same accident happens if one of those present has *tjemakanya* the deceased, viz. crossed his way, that is to say has had sexual relations with the same woman as the deceased. (This is matlulana). As the hut of the deceased knew this man, so his new hut in the ground recognises and reveals him !

764 would answer: "How can you propose such a thing to me? Am I not immature (mbisi, properly raw)? I am not yet ripe! Is defilement of death not there? With whom could I wash it away?" (Viguet). The first digger is also called "the one of the head," the second, "the one of the feet," because one of them will carry the corpse by the head, the other by the feet. Women may also bury a corpse upon occasion.

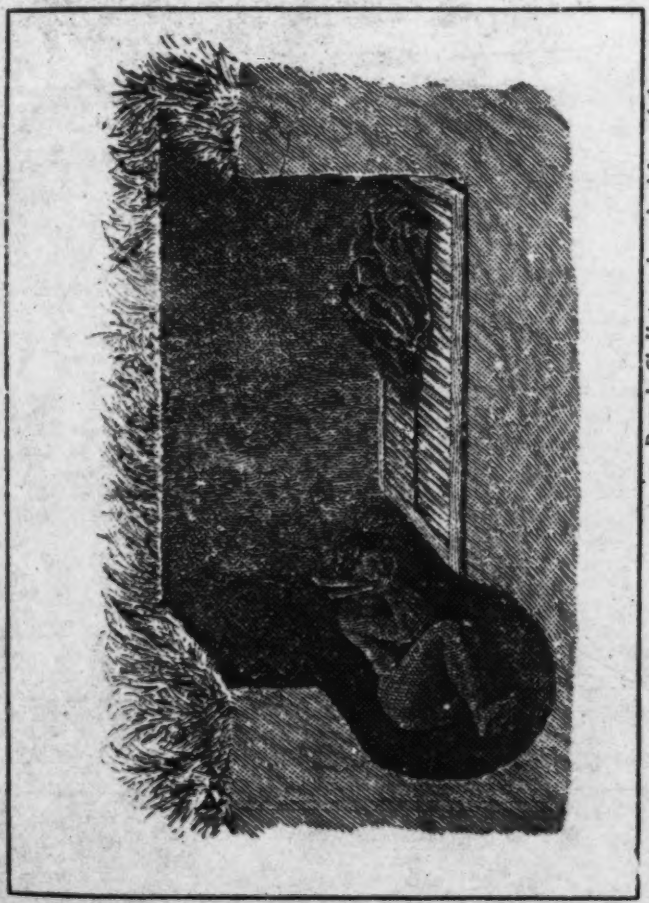
764 So the grave-diggers go back to the hut and begin to wrap the corpse in his rugs and in his mat (ku tjimba). They stitch the mat twice (to prevent it from slipping?) (Viguet). They generally wait till sunset to perform the burial. When the time has come, they make a hole in the wall of the hut on the right side, as the husband dwells in the right half of the house, the wife in the left half. The corpse must not be carried out of the hut by the door, but by that artificial opening (1). So he leaves the hut head foremost (2). They sometimes stop up their noses with the leaves of a bush called ngupfana, which has a strong scent, in order not to perceive the smell of death (moya wa lifu). They march slowly, without a word, men and women following them silently. The "one of the head" goes down to the first level, 764 the one of the feet follows him. They have already put in the 778 place for the head a piece of wood, a piece of a branch of *nkanye*, 769 their sacred tree, one foot long and three inches broad, to be used as a pillow. At the bottom, on the soil, they stretch some old rugs. They lay the corpse down (3) on its left side, the head on the pillow. The grave has been dug in such a way that its long axis is directed towards that cardinal point whence the ancestors came, so that the deceased, having his head slightly

(1) In the Hlabi clans, the corpse is carried through the door, but the plaster on both sides of the door (marimba) is beaten and falls down. It will be repaired later on. In the Northern clans the hut of the deceased is not so strongly tabooed as amongst the Ba-Ronga. When it has been purified it will be used again.

(2) Comparative Ethnography: In Switzerland it is a common saying that a corpse must leave the house feet foremost.

764 (3) The Ba-Ngoni place their dead in the grave in the sitting position, a knife in
513 their hands, as they are a race of murderers! (Viguet). It may be that the reclining position given to the corpse by the Ba-Ronga, is the result of an evolution. At any rate, this is not the true sleeping position, as Natives generally do not bend their limbs when sleeping.

764/769 bent backwards, is intended to look in that direction (1). Now they take away from the deceased all those rugs in which they



Drawn by Cl. Heaton and reproduced from « Anthropos ».

A Rouga in his grave.

had wrapped him, and cut them through the middle with a knife, making a large opening in each of them as well as in the mats, also

(1) I attended on December 17th 1908, the burial of one of my neighbours at Rikatla, called Sokis, and described the rites which I witnessed that day in the paper already quoted, published by *Anthropos*, September 1910.

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764
823 in the pieces of clothing which have all been brought and which must be thrown into the grave. " Everything must *hefemula*, breathe its last, just the same as the deceased," said Spoon. "It is taboo." No iron must be put into the grave. Iron, black iron, is *ndjoba* ; it is dangerous to the deceased, because it does not decay as quickly as the corpse, the rugs and the mats... It must not be buried. Copper and brass still less! Because they do not even change colour. " These would call Death to the village because they remain shining ; they would shine for Death and point out other people of the kraal saying : Kill!" (Viguet) Copper and brass bracelets as well as white snuff boxes are called *nhlale*, not *ndjoba* (1).

It is interesting to notice how the different belongings of the dead are dealt with, and where they are put. There are two categories. Some must disappear with the deceased, some will be kept.

To the first category belong above all his rugs ; they are wrapped round his body. He sleeps in them ; they must not be tied, however, because it is taboo to tie a corpse ; the spirit, *shikwembu*, would become angry at being imprisoned and would cause evil (2). The mats are spread in the first hole, as well as the old jackets and trousers, because there the deceased will come and sit on them, when he goes out of his hut to rest in his square. The earthen pots, especially the old ones, are broken on the grave afterwards " to show anger against death " (Elias). The mug, which is one of them, may be occasionally put on the grave, pierced at the bottom, and offerings of beer will be poured into it later on for the dead. All these perishables are to die with him. They are called his filth (thyaka ra yena). Objects of the first category are sometimes burnt in the Northern clans.

(1) It is sometimes a matter of discussion to know what is *ndjoba* and what is not. I saw the digger tear off the buttons from the trousers of Sokis, when he was cutting them through, and throw them out of the grave. An old woman, thinking perhaps that they were not of such an incorruptible nature as iron, put them in again, and again he threw them out.

(2) It would even seem that no knot must enter a grave. Two bits of skin tied together and forming the clothing of Sokis round the loins were first untied and then thrown into the grave.

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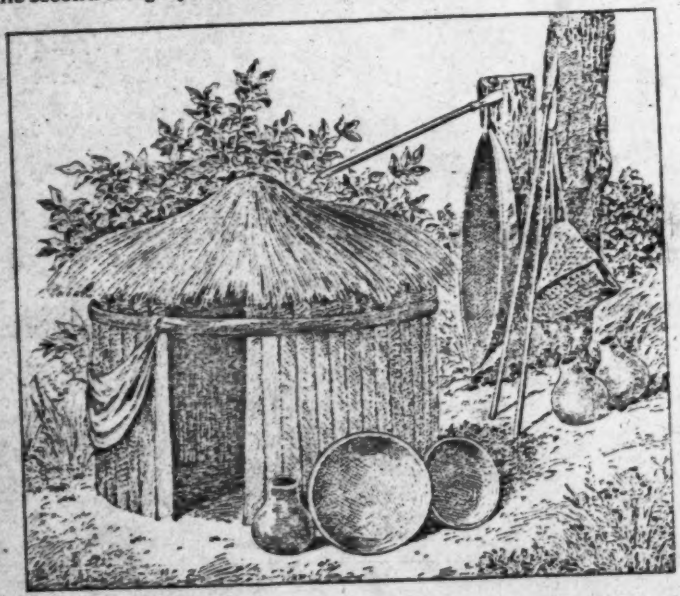
764 *The second category* includes the articles which are preserved as having still some value ; they will be hung on the tree, or placed at the foot of the tree near the grave, or in front of the abandoned hut, and will be duly purified during the next few days, as we shall see. Good baskets, new pots, assagais (1), knives, hoes etc., belong to the second category. They will afterwards be distributed amongst



Drawn by Cl. Heaton from a photo of H. A. Junod and reproduced from "Anthropos".

The grave of Sokis, a man of Rikatla.

(Sokis being an exorcist, a little hut has been built on his grave).

the heirs. In the Northern clans, seeds taken from the store of the deceased are sometimes also thrown into the grave with the words : " Go with your seeds. "

764 769 But let us return to the burial. The " one of the head " officiates in the grave ; then all the relations help him to fill the hole. They

(1) The blade but not the handle, which is included in his " filth " and which is broken. " The handle is *he*, the blade is not *he*. "

764/769 push the sandy soil with their hands. With great care they remove every piece of root, as if to make the sand perfectly clean. This is a taboo dictated by respect for the deceased. To do otherwise would mean "to throw him away" (tshukumeta). The head has been covered with a towel and the earth is brought near it very gently. Now the digger takes two twigs from the branch of a male nkanye (the nkanye is a dioecious vegetable) and puts them into the right hand of the deceased, which is seen emerging from the rugs near his cheek. When the earth reaches the level of this arm, the latter is stretched out slowly so as to cause the two twigs to emerge. This stretching process goes on as long as it is possible to draw the arm outwards, the hole being gradually filled in. When the arm is fully extended, the digger clutches (wutla) one of the twigs and gives it to one of his helpers, who keeps it; the second remains in the hand of the deceased. Such is, at any rate, the regular way of performing the *rite of the twig*. But often one twig only is put in the hand and it is taken away as soon as the earth reaches it, without any stretching out of the arm; or it is made to emerge from the sand by gently pulling all the time, till the grave is filled in, so that, when the tumulus is formed, the end of the twig is still to be seen. The younger brother will then take it to perform the religious rite. The twig is called the *mhamba*, a word which we translate generally by offering, but which designates any object by means of which men enter into relation with the spirits of the ancestors. The officiating person sits at the foot of the tumulus. All the people sit round the grave silently, the men nearer, the women farther off. He holds the twig with the right hand and turns it round his head, making circular figures in the air (1). Then he pronounces the sacramental syllable *Tsu, tsu, tsu*, two or three times, prolonging the sound; he has called the spirits. He prays: "You, my ancestors, who are assembled to day... Do you not see this? You have taken him. I am alone now. I am dead! I pray you, who are yonder (kolaho), as he has gone back to you, that

(1) This is the kind of sacrifice called *litsañwa*, explained in Part VI, Chap. II. Its aim is to secure a good reception for the deceased on the part of the psikwembu, viz. the ancestor gods.

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764 we may remain in peace. He did not leave us in anger. Let us mourn him gently, in peace. Let us help each other to mourn him well, even our parents-in-law from amongst whom he has taken his wife." It may be that he forgets to say something which ought to be said ; then some of his hearers remind him quietly of the omission and he adds the words to his prayer.

764 *The wailing* (ku djila nkosi). As soon as he has finished praying, those present commence crying ; the wailing begins. The women get to their feet and shout loudly, throwing themselves on the ground. The wife of the deceased cries more than any one else : "I remain alone in the lonely plain (libalen). Where have you gone? You have left me." The wailing generally starts on a very high note and finishes a little lower, expressing the pain of the heart in a touching, penetrating manner. Here is one of these sentences, which can hardly be called a song. I heard it in 1893 at the burial of a young woman who was found drowned in the lake of Rikatla.

O my mother ! O my mother ! You have left me. where have you gone? ! (1)

The parents-in-law lament over their daughter, the new widow. Everyone then begins to lament over his own relations who have recently died. The brothers weep together without shouting. They say : " You have gone first. We shall soon follow you, because there is attraction in death. "

It is during the mourning that pots, handles of assagais, etc. are broken over the grave.

761 Let us stop a little while at this point.

783 We have seen enough already to observe that, for the Thongas, death (lifu) is not only a sad event, a great cause of pain on account of the 765 bereavement, but a dreadful contaminating power which puts all objects and people in the neighbourhood of the deceased, all his relatives, even those dwelling far away, working in Johannesburg for instance, into a state of uncleanness. This uncleanness is very dangerous indeed. It kills, if not properly treated. All are not affected in the same way. There are concentric circles round the deceased : the widows are the

(1) See for the notes of this song Part V. Ch. III. B.

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765 783 761 834 829 inner circle and will undergo a very rigorous purification ; the grave diggers come next ; then the inhabitants of the bereaved village, the relations residing in other villages, even the relatives of the wives of the deceased. All these being unclean are placed beyond the pale of society : "Muti wu tjumile," "the village is dark," is the technical expression. This marginal period lasts longer for those who are most affected ; one year and more for the widows, one month for the village, five or six days only for the mourners from outside. But there are many taboos in connexion with this period. Sexual relations are severely prohibited amongst married people, but the *gangisa* is not so strongly objected to, at any rate in some districts. We shall also meet with the aggregation rites by which re-entry into the ordinary mode of life is secured. The funeral rites may last for one year and are very complex. There are three great moments in the sequence of these rites : 1) *The Great Mourning* which lasts a few days, just after the burial, generally only five days. Here the purification is essentially medical and aims at cleansing the persons and the objects which were directly in contact with the deceased. 2) *The sexual rites* which tend to purify the collective life of the village by the removal of its defilement. 3) *The family rites*, consisting in gatherings of all the relatives, and accompanied by religious ceremonies. These seem to aim at restoring the life of the family, viz. of the social group, which has been diminished by the death of one of its members.

768 This general sequence is found in all the clans. But the rites themselves differ greatly ; I shall try to depict these differences clearly. My information is more complete as regards the Ronga clans, but I owe to Viguet some entirely new and very interesting material regarding the Hlabi rites.

IV. *The Great Mourning of the first five days.*

1) The Great Mourning amongst the Ba-Ronga.

764 783 [824] Just after the burial, all the inhabitants of the village go to the lake or the river to bathe. The grave-diggers nibble a *ndjao*, the root of a juncus which has magical power. Special rites will then be performed for the widows. We shall describe

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764 783 them in the next chapter. When they come back from the pool, one of the men climbs on the hut and removes from its top the crown of woven grass, which was its glory during the life of its master. The hut participates in the general state of uncleanness of all his belongings. This crown will be put before the door to close it, and no one will dare to enter any more till the day of the crushing of the hut.

In the Mpfumo clans, that first evening, the grave diggers have some preliminary purification rites to go through : 1) a *hondla*, viz. an ablution with leaves of the nkuhlu tree which have been crushed in a mortar with some water ; 2) in former times they used to make a pipe with the shell of a raw sala, place in it an ember and a little hen's dung, and *smoke* this disgusting mixture.

765 783 From the first day, the grave diggers and the widows, when eating, must use special spoons *(psihanti)* made from old broken calabashes. It is taboo for them to take food with their fingers from the common plate during the five days of the Great Mourning.

The night comes. All the widows sleep in the open, their huts, which belonged to the deceased, being taboo. If it rains, they sleep in the other huts of the village.

765 755 783 On the following day, the *doctor* comes and proceeds to the medical purification of the widows and of the grave-diggers. This will consist in three successive *vapour baths*, on the first, third and fifth day after death. These *mahungulo* are administered in the same way as the one I have already described in connection with the infantile rites (p. 55). But the drugs boiled in the pot and the pills burnt in the fire are considered very powerful, especially those of the first day, so much so that the pot in which they have been prepared must be broken on the grave. The two grave-diggers and the first widow must be exposed together to this particularly powerful disinfectant, the widow keeping on her old clothing during the operation. The second and third bath, those provided for the other widows, are not so strong, and the pot can be kept. In the case of these the widow does not enter together with the grave-diggers. These rites, as

769 The bones of the dead are never disinterred. It is a taboo; grave is respected and women do not dare to till the ground over it. Often one comes across a small thick bush in the midst of mealie gardens, and one sees broken pots under the branches. It is an old grave. Later on, when no one remembers who has been buried there, agriculture regains its sway. If a bush fire has reached the sacred wood and damaged it, the person who lit it must atone by sacrificing a fowl in order to "quench" (timula) it.

REMARKS ABOUT DEATH AND BURIAL

761 These very complicated funeral rites of the Thongas clearly show the existence of three great intuitions in their minds:

783 1) Man is immortal and becomes a god through death.

775 2) There is extreme danger attached to the defilement which accompanies death. This uncleanness contaminates the community and can only be removed by collective purification.

3) The social group, being diminished by death, must be reinforced by special means (family gatherings, choice of a successor, etc.). Hence three categories of rites: *religious*, *purificatory* and *social*.

On the other hand some of the rites we have described present unmistakably the character of *passage rites*, because death also means a passage: for the deceased, passage from the world of the living to the world of the dead; for his relations, passage from one phase of life to another.

764 775 Separation from terrestrial life is symbolised for the deceased by the rite of piercing the wall of the hut in order to solemnise, as it were, his official departure from his former dwelling. I should consider also as a separation rite the custom of cutting through all his garments and mats, in order to make them "draw the last breath." To effect aggregation to the new world, the grave-diggers prepare for him an underground hut and square place, they place him in his new dwelling in a sitting position (if such is the true explanation of the folding of the limbs), they direct his eyes towards the cardinal point whence his ancestors have come. I have sometimes had the impression that even in these rites, the idea of a marginal period, or of a period of transition, was not lacking; the deceased is not prayed to prior to the great family gatherings, which take place three, six, or twelve months after the death. Then his hut is crushed or closed. It would seem that he has gone

765 775

462 888 she has contracted such an intimate union with Mother Earth that she cannot conceive existence away from her gardens, and she crawls to them with her hoe, by a kind of instinct, till she dies.

764 The death of the woman is accompanied by the same rites as the death of a man. I must mention, however, the custom of *mahloko*, which takes place when a woman dies while still in her prime. Mahloko comes from *nhloko*, head. The explanation of this technical word is this : the parents of the woman say : "Our head (viz. a person belonging to us) has died ; let us go to mourn her."

587 578 Let us first see how this mourning takes place *in the Ronga clans.* If the two families were very friendly, the parents of the deceased will probably bring with them a little girl, saying : "This is our little green meat (mbuti), our little orange (rather sala, fruit of the nsala tree)." They offer her to the husband to take the place of the deceased wife, and a new contract will be made. The widower will then at once pay a first part of the lobolo, £ 5 for instance, and, in the course of time, he will marry his sister-in-law. But generally the visitors are angry, and the mahloko ceremony is very unpleasant. It may be that the deceased wife had not been entirely paid for. In that case her parents will come at the end of the mourning to "claim the herd" (ramela ntlhambi).

764 578 754 But though there may be no difficult lobola question in the way, uneasiness is felt, because the brothers of the deceased cannot help thinking that their sister has been killed by witchcraft. It was not yet time for her to die ; so she must have been bewitched by the husband's family, probably by her co-wives, who were jealous of her. When the Great Mourning took place, they hardly came to the mortuary village. One or two went to see their "head," and mourned her in their own kraal. To day, the day of mahloko, they assemble, and throw bones in order to know who will have to speak, who will receive the mahloko money, whether the money has been bewitched ? The whole company starts for the mortuary village, driving a goat before them. They sit down outside in the bush with dark looks ; there is no longer any hut to receive them... They have been noticed by the

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764 inhabitants of the kraal. One of them, the saluter (mulosi), goes
604 to meet them and offers them a shilling. They keep silence.
578 He tells them the news of the village. They do not answer.
754 He leaves them and comes a second time with a fresh present. Then they consent to tell the news of their home, but they do not enter the village. The same man returns to them a third time with £ 1 ; they refuse to accept it. He adds 10/. (£ 1.10 is considered the normal sum to be paid as a kind of fine by the widower to the parents of the deceased.) They refuse again : this is an insult! Happily the *ntukulu* is there ; he will act as mediator between the two families. The visitors summoned him on their arrival and he has been sitting with them the whole time ; is he not the son of their sister ? But before he went to them, his father has given him his instructions : "Tell them that I have not eaten your mother." The *ntukulu*, as we shall see, is very free with his maternal uncles. He has the right of teasing them, even insulting them. Seeing that they do not accept the money, he stands and gives vent to his grief, throws sand at them, tries to drive them away, weeps. "No! Father has not killed mother! He is not a wizard! She died a natural death!" They see his tears, and then consent to enter the village.

764 In front of the mortuary hut, all the belongings of the deceased
768 wife have been piled up, together with the straw crown of the hut :
595 her pots, plates, baskets, spoons, mortars, etc. The brothers
782 break everything. Should there be any new implements amongst
[578] them, they will perhaps give them to their nieces. Then they lift up the roof of the hut and throw it into the bush. They pick all the plaster from the walls and throw it away where they threw the roof. The sacrifice is then accomplished amidst the ruins of the destroyed hut. Whilst it is being prepared, the women of both families insult each other. The female relatives of the deceased say to the women of the village : "You have killed her because she was a splinter in your eyes" (shilabi). The others answer : "Have you seen us kill her ? Perhaps people do not die with you ?" The *bukwele*, the special jealousy which almost always exists between co-wives, explains how it is possible for them to address such amenities to each other. But the victim is

764 prepared, all the limbs cut off, the portion of the gods set apart.
782 The elder brother of the deceased woman prays in these words :
768 "My sister, go in peace, be not angry ; because we love you, we
595 have come to mourn you to-day. Do not say we have not mourned you. Go to so and so (father, grandfather, etc.), call them here, give us good sleep and good health, etc." The batukulu appropriate the offering and the mourning ends in laughter, dancing and drinking. The neighbours come and take part in the rejoicings.

When they return home, the mourners spend all the mahloko money in buying wine. They sometimes become quite intoxicated. Afterwards both families begin to visit each other again.
764 This custom of the mahloko fine is so strong that converts
768 still adhere to it. But they usually send the money to the wife's family when informing them of the death, and no other ceremony is performed.

In the Northern clans the mahloko are also paid, but it seems that the family of the widower considers that it has the right to claim the repayment of the whole lobolo, when the deceased wife has left no child to compensate for the loss. In Nondwane, though we are still in Ronga territory, when the woman dies
765 shortly after marriage the lobolo must be repaid. Further north
782 the procedure is as follows : the deceased woman is buried by her husband according to the ordinary rules ; one year elapses and a special feast is celebrated, similar to the "beer of mourning" (page 164), in the village of the wife's parents, where both families gather together and provide the necessary victims. It commences with a sacrifice in which the father of the deceased wife squeezes the *psanyi* of the goat on to those present, all the time insulting the gods who have killed his child and made trouble between the two families. He ends with words addressed to the widower's relations : "I cleanse you from your misfortune." The widower's father does the same thing, insulting also his own gods, and every one rubs his body with the green liquid squeezed from the *psanyi*. Then prayer for new blessings is offered and the sacrifice is made, as
765 customary, and the actual discussion as to claims takes place. Each family takes possession of a hut, the widower's family assembling

567 of slavery. Hundreds of them still live there and are recognisable by their very broad, coarse features. 2) The *laws of succession* 595 which regulate the present agnatic Thonga family also lead to 336 polygamy as a necessary consequence. A young brother inherits the widow of his elder brother, be he married or not. If polygamy began in this second way, its increase in later times is not to be wondered at. It answers admirably to the Bantu ideal of life. As we saw, a man who has a harem, tshengwe (page 126), is a man who has succeeded in his career! This is the regular method of becoming a rich man, an ideal which is by no means confined to the black race! On the other hand sensuality develops very quickly in the polygamic family and its very development reacts on the custom and tends to foster it.

595 I do not think the origin of polygamy can be traced with 764 certitude. However, there are amongst the Thongas some striking customs, giving to the "first" or "great wife" a special position, which seem to confirm the hypothesis of a primitive monogamy. The first of these is the ritual incision made by the first wife in the inguinal region after the death of the husband ; it is not performed by the other widows (p. 200). In the same way the widower carries out this rite only after the death of the first wife and not when "little wives" die. The second is to be found in the rites of the foundation of the village ; as we shall see in the next chapter, the first wife has a special part to play in these significant ceremonies. When I asked Magingi, an old Rikatla heathen, why such a difference was made between the first wife and her co-wives, he told me : "The first is the true wife and the others are but thieves. That is why it is said at the death of the first wife : the house of the husband has been crushed (a tjhobekelwi hi yindlu ya kwe). When another dies, it is only said : he has lost a wife (a felwi hi nsati)"...

595 The species of sacredness which surrounds the first wife appears 643 even more plainly in the case of the marriages of chiefs. The principal wife of the chief is in one sense not the actual first wife, but the woman who has been bought with the money collected by his subjects and whose son will be the heir to the chieftainship (See Part III). Generally the "wife of the country" is not the first

621 596 833 768 1) *Social rites.* The muti, as we have seen, is a little organised community having its own laws, amongst which the most important seems to be the law of hierarchy. The elder brother is the undisputed master and no one can supersede him. He is the owner of the village. No one must "steal it" from him. Should any one do so, the whole community would suffer and no children would be born ; the life of the organism would be deeply affected. That is the reason why the headman must go first with his principal wife to have relations with her in the new village, and thus *take possession* of it or *tie* it. For this same reason, when the headman dies, the village *must* move. It is taboo to remain in it. Until the inheritance has been distributed, it is still *his home* (kwa kwe) ; but as soon as this ceremony has taken place, the villagers must go away, and close the door with a thorny branch. The part played by the 621 595 562 768 764 principal wife in all these ceremonies is most remarkable. It is absolutely imperative that the headman should "tie the village" with her, and not with another of his spouses. Should she be very old, the law must be observed all the same; should she be ill, and unable to have sexual relations, the village simply cannot be moved. In the Northern clans we see her taking the shield and the assagai, closing the village and "giving it" to the inmates, even performing a sacrifice and praying to the gods. It is very rare to see a woman presiding at a public religious ceremony; but she is the owner of the village as well as the headman. Moving is imperative when she dies as well as after the death of the headman. The main gate must also be closed and a new entrance made in the fence to be used during the year of mourning; in the case of her death, this opening must be made on the left of the regular *mharana*, whilst, when the husband dies, it is made on the right side; just as in the hut, when the corpse is removed for burial. (See page 138.)

351 789 621 2) *Protective rites.* These are those which concern the fence. This fence does not afford material protection. The branches dry up very soon and, in the case of a bush-fire, for instance, they would do more harm than good. It is a spiritual protection, a barrier of charms, of magic influences, to prevent the entrance of wizards and of all the hostile powers of the bush. We shall understand this better when treating of witchcraft superstitions. (Part VI.)

182 621 829 3) *Passage rites.* The reader will have been surprised to observe amongst the ceremonies of the moving of villages, many features which we have already met with in the circumcision school, or in the mourning customs. At first sight there seems to be no relation whatever between the moving of a village, the initiation of boys and the

727 They have killed... So they are exposed to the mysterious and
775 deadly influence of the *nuru* and must consequently undergo a
828 medical treatment. What is the *nuru* ? *Nuru* is the spirit of the
783 slain which tries to take its revenge on the slayer. It haunts him
789 and may drive him into insanity : his eyes swell, protrude and
761 become inflamed. He will go out of his mind, be attacked by giddiness (ndzululwan) and the thirst for blood may lead him to fall upon members of his own family and to stab them with his assagay. To prevent such misfortunes, a special medication is required : the slayers must *lurulula tiyimpi ta bu*, take away the nuru of their sanguinary expedition. (Lurulula comes from nuru, plur. miluru (1).

In what does this treatment consist ? The slayers must remain for some days at the capital. They are taboo. They put on old clothes, eat with special spoons because their hands are

764 (1) We met with the notion of *nuru* for the first time à propos of the rite of
775 luma (p. 400) ; we shall find it again when dealing with hunting customs (Part IV).
761 The nuru is to be feared not only in the case of slain enemies but in connexion with any human corpse. As a proof, I may quote the following curious story which Spoon told me and of the truth of which he was fully convinced. A traveller died under the great fig-tree of Libombo (near Rikatla). He had climbed on to the tree and fallen on his own stick, which he had planted in the ground. He was not buried, as no one knew him. So his corpse fell into decomposition on the spot; his skull became white. Later on a bush fire burnt all the grass and the skull was
764 seen for years "saying mpha" (it was shining), the teeth "saying bva" (descriptive
775 adverb, same meaning). One day the boys of Libombo went to pick wild figs from
755 the tree and again saw the skull. Spoon was one of them. The fire had just passed
789 by again. "We beat it with our sticks and amused ourselves by rolling it over like a
761 ball. We did not know it was a human skull... When we got home we began to be seized by the drunkenness of nuru, the disease of those who have killed a man. During the night we were delirious (hanta-hanteka), our eyes swelled and were full of exudations (malanga), the four of us, Tsukela, Tlabin, Sibakuze and myself. Next morning my uncle went to the fig-tree and saw that we had killed a man there! The medicine-man who understands the treatment of nuru, Dudela, who had been a slayer in war, called us to his village. We stood in a line before him ; he poured a little of his powder into the hands of each one of us, took a little in his mouth, rubbed his forehead. Then he insulted us saying : "You will die! Who began beating that skull ?" Each of us denied having given the first blow. Then he said : "Take care! Do not go there any more nor near that nkuhlu tree where another corpse has been burnt under the leaves! Go away."

514 When a man has murdered another in a scuffle, he can replace this nuru medicine
789 by his own urine. He must drink a little of it and rub his forehead with it. The
775 giddiness will pass away. If the murder has been committed from a distance, as with
626 a gun, the nuru is not so much to be feared, as the enemy was far away. A little of
761 the medicine will be sufficient to treat the murderer. Spoon is ignorant of the composition of the nuru drug.

775 776 787 remains *in his grave*. Is not his grave his house (I. p. 137)? Does he not sit on his square, where his mats have been unrolled? Thus the life of the shikwembu seems to be the exact continuation of his earthly existence. That such is the idea is proved by the two bones which represent the gods in the set of divinatory bones: 1) the astragalus or nail of an ant-bear, because ant-bears live in the earth, and come out only during the night; 2) the astragalus of an antelope, found in the excrement of a hyena; the hyena ate the antelope, and swallowed the bone, which came to light again; in the same way the gods have been buried in the ground, and reveal themselves later on. (Compare Ch. III. D.) A third idea, more or less intermediate between the other two, is that the gods reside *in the sacred woods*, and there lead their family life in human form, parents and children, even little children, who are carried on their mothers' shoulders. Mboza went so far as to say that they are married and bring forth children, as children are seen on their mothers' backs. Here again, we find the life of the other world regarded as the exact reproduction of this terrestrial existence.

4) The Sacred Woods.

764 769 778 These are vast, almost impenetrable thickets, in which the ancient chiefs have been buried; they are called *ntimu*, (mu-mi) cemeteries. Every clan owns one or more of these burying places. The ntimu is reserved for the men of the royal family, those who have been the owners of the land. They are buried in different sections of the forest, "according to their villages," in such a way that the wood represents separate cemeteries, corresponding to the

171 they bear the marks, and only in that case does he take them to Nyambe (See *Ames primitives*, Th. Burnier, Paris Mission, 102, Boulevard Arago).

The Ba-Chopi believe that their ancestor-gods dwell in rivers. They have no fear of the graves where the deceased have been buried, and even till the ground over them, asserting that the bones alone remain in the earth, the ghosts themselves having departed into the river where they are heard singing, dancing, and playing on antelope horns. When the chiefs make a national offering, they mix the meat with water when they present it to their gods, and the one officiating turns his eyes towards the river when he prays. He places the part of the victim which has been cut out for the gods on the bank of the river, and everybody goes home. The gods come when all have gone and take the offering. It is taboo to remain on the spot and to be seen by them!

villages of the living. No woman, and no uterine nephew is buried in the official cemeteries. 764 769

These woods are taboo. It is forbidden to gather fuel there, to cut down any tree, or to allow the bush fire to enter them. Should anyone have imprudently set fire to the grass in the neighbourhood, and be unable to extinguish the blaze, and should the fire thus pass over a grave, he must provide a goat for sacrifice, in order to "extinguish" (timula) the sacred wood. All entry is strictly prohibited except to the guardian of the wood (mutameli wa ntimu), the priest, who is the descendant of the gods of the forest. He goes there from time to time, to offer the sacrifices. He penetrates into the dense foliage by a narrow path, hardly perceptible. I have often visited one of the most celebrated woods, that of Libombo, two miles east of the Rikatla station. The old Libombo chiefs were buried there, and Nkolele, the proprietor of the forest, was very proud of it. He asserted that Mahazule, the chief of Nondwane, belonging to the reigning family of Mazwaya, whose forefathers had conquered the land of Nondwane, feared the spot and, in order to avoid it, took a circuitous route to Lourenço-Marques, or, if forced to take that road, stopped near the wood to pay his respects to the old chiefs buried there. I did not see anything remarkable in that wood. Forcing my way through the bushes, brambles, and creepers I at length came to a sort of tumulus, but very slightly raised, on which were to be seen some dried leaves of maize, the remains of offerings placed there some time previously. The young man who acted as my guide — considerably against his inclination, I fancy, — turned away his face, with a terrified expression, when we came upon this grave. In another spot I found some other tombs. Snakes thrive, naturally, in these thickets, where they are undisturbed, but I did not see any on that occasion. No mausoleum has been built over any of these venerated sepulchres ; a few pieces of old blackened pottery were all we saw — the remnants of the jugs and plates belonging to the deceased, which were broken on the spot after his death. 778

The dread in which these sacred woods are held by the Natives is certainly not due to any unusual objects they may have seen 769 778 538